

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application is respectfully requested in view of the remarks and enclosures herewith.

Claims 21, 24, 26, 29 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Cuisinier *et al.* The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Enclosed are verified English translations of international patent application PCT/FR97/01315 filed July 15, 1997, and French application 96/09337 filed July 19, 1996, to which the present application claims priority.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is entitled to a priority date of July 19, 1996.

As previously indicated, Cuisiniere *et al.* has a publication date of July 1997.

As review of the verified translation will result in the present application being afforded a priority date of July 17, 1996, which date is a full year prior to the publication date of Cuisiniere, Applicants respectfully submit that the art rejection based on Cuisiniere is improper and cannot stand.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested in view of the remarks above and the verified English translations of the priority documents.

**REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW**

If any issue remains an impediment to allowance, a further interview with the Examiner is respectfully requested and the Examiner is additionally requested to contact the undersigned to arrange a mutually convenient time and manner for such an interview.

**CONCLUSION**

Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended herein and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance, or an interview at a very early date with a view to placing the application in condition for allowance, are earnestly solicited. The undersigned looks forward to hearing favorably from the Examiner at an early date.

Respectfully Submitted,  
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